Preface to the Electronic Edition

In the interest of presenting H.S. Lehr's memoirs as they originally appeared in the University Herald typographical errors and inconsistencies have not been corrected. In a few instances, the original text is illegible or is simply missing; these gaps have been noted by ellipses. In some cases, only a portion of a word is illegible or missing; in these situations I have restored the word in parentheses. In addition, some chapter headings, numbers, and titles are inconsistent and are presented here in the form in which they were published.

All installments appear on the first page of the University Herald unless otherwise noted.

Kelly A. Wacker, Editor

Several years ago, in the course of researching the history of Ohio Northern University, I came across the serialized memoirs of the institution's first president, Dr. Henry Solomon Lehr. I originally intended to compile a draft version of Dr. Lehr's writings for research purposes only, but the advanced state of deterioration of some of the materials suggested the need for a complete document while the records still existed.

The content of this volume is drawn from two sources in the Heterick Memorial Library. One is the microfilmed copies of the University Herald. The filmed newspaper is, however, incomplete. Most gaps were filled by consulting a scrapbook compiled by Dr. Lehr's daughter, Sarah Lehr Kennedy. It was the state of this latter material that prompted my original concerns. Unfortunately there are still several missing installments, and these have been noted in the body of the work.

Dr. Lehr, was president of Ohio Northern University from 1871 to 1900. In 1898 the Methodist Episcopal Church's Central Conference purchased the institution from the original trustees, one of whom was Dr. Lehr. After some delay Dr. Leroy Belt was selected as the new president in May of 1901. At that time Dr. Lehr agreed to continue as secretary, treasurer, and general manager for a period of three years. Due to differences between the two men, Dr. Lehr severed his ties with the University at the end of the 1901-02 academic year. He then moved to Winona Lake, Indiana. On April 27, 1905 President Belt resigned, and Dr. Albert Edwin Smith became Ohio Northern's third president. With the change of administrations, Dr. Lehr returned to Ada in September 1905.

It was during his stay in Indiana that Dr. Lehr began writing his memoirs which appeared in serial form in the University Herald of Ada. This task occupied the period from 1904 to early 1909. Dr. Lehr began writing shortly after leaving Ada and at a time when the memory of his recent dispute with Dr. Belt must have been very much in his mind.

If the tone of the last few installations is at times sharp it is worth noting that Dr. Lehr also acknowledged his successor's very real achievements. By that time he could afford to be generous. In March 1906 Dr. Lehr had been the honored guest at a banquet held in the Ada Methodist Church at which Dr. Smith officiated. The following month Dr. Belt died at his home in Kenton. At age 78 Dr. Lehr had outlived both his old antagonist and the controversies arising between them.
I am deeply indebted to Ms. Kelly Wacker for her long hours of work in compiling this history. The labor normally associated with such a project was increased by the nearly illegible condition of much of the original material.

Paul M. Logsdon, Director Heterick Memorial Library
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